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SUBJECT: TURKEY'S ROBUST ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING AND
HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS

¶1. (U) Summary: Turkey's contributions to multi-national peacekeeping operations around the world are significant. Possessing NATO's second largest military, Turkey has led operations in the Middle East and the Balkans, and has provided troops and support to UN initiatives in Africa and East Asia as well. Current peacekeeping activities are stretching the military's capabilities, however, since the bulk of its large conscript force is either unsuitable for foreign deployment or engaged in combating PKK terrorism in the southeast. End Summary

Continuing Leadership in Afghanistan

¶2. (U) Since the inception of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have continuously contributed troops and have held leadership roles several times. Turkey led ISAF-II with 1300 troops in 2002 and ISAF-VII with 1430 troops in 2005, while simultaneously managing the Kabul International Airport. In 2003, former Turkish foreign minister Hikmet Cetin was assigned as NATO's senior civilian leader in Afghanistan. Currently hosting its rotating headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey is a founding member of the Southeast Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), which successfully made its first deployment in command of the Kabul Multi-National Battalion in 2006. Turkey has also carried out in-place training of 1500 Afghan military personnel and has consistently provided vehicles and supplies to ISAF. As is true for other ISAF partners, Turkish forces operate under caveats that limit their ability to operate outside of their assigned area of responsibility.

¶3. (U) Through its provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Wardak, established in November 2006, Turkey has further extended the scope of its reconstruction and development contributions. Since 2002, Turkey has provided almost 42 million dollars worth of economic and technical assistance, including the construction and renovation of hospitals, schools, bridges, mosques, and potable water wells. Turkish entrepreneurs have undertaken USD 1.5 billion worth of projects since 2002, and Turkish firms hold investments totaling USD 200 million, leading those of all other countries. The GOT has also provided vocational training courses for Afghan women, higher education scholarships, and training opportunities in Turkey and Afghanistan for Afghan

diplomats, politicians, and police. Turkey has encountered risks in Afghanistan as well: a July 17 suicide bomber attack on a convoy carrying Wardak PRT personnel nearly killed the Turkish PRT chief and injured a Turkish security official.

Rebuilding Lebanon

¶4. (U) The TAF's participation in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is its second-largest commitment to Middle East peacekeeping after ISAF. Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 in 2006, a Turkish engineering construction company of 261 military personnel and a Navy frigate carrying 234 personnel were deployed as part of UNIFIL. With the objective of aiding the Lebanese Armed Forces in Southern Lebanon, securing aid to civilians, and ensuring the resettlement of refugees, the TAF had supported UNIFIL with approximately 1000 army and navy personnel as of May 2007. Turkey also volunteered to command UNIFIL's naval component and has made air and seaports, as well as airlift, available to UNIFIL contributors. The Turkish government pushed through this deployment despite strong criticism from opposition parties, who argued Turkey should not risk its troops in a Middle East dispute while the West provides little help to Turkey against PKK terrorism.

Peacekeeping in the Balkans

¶5. (U) Turkey has aided peacekeeping operations in the Balkans since 1993. The TAF contributed 1400 troops to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina between 1993 and 1995. Following the transfer of duty to NATO in line with the Dayton Peace Agreement, Turkey

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reinforced its contribution, deploying a brigade to the Implementation Force (IFOR) in 1995, a brigade to the Stability Force (SFOR) in 1996, a battalion to the European Union Force (EUFOR) in 2004, and a motorized infantry company with staff officers to EUFOR-ALTHEA in 2005. In parallel with UNPROFOR and later NATO operations, Turkey contributed ships and sailors to Operation Sharp Guard under NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean in the Adriatic between 1993 and 1996.

¶6. (U) Turkish F-16's completed more than 2000 hours of flying time during NATO operations in Kosovo. The TAF later granted the use of three Turkish airfields to NATO aircraft. Turkey joined the Albania Force (AFOR) with a Field Duties Division in the summer of 1999. Additionally, Turkey provided shelter for 18,000 refugees during the height of the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. The TAF continues its contribution to the Kosovo Force (KFOR) Multi-National Task Force South (MNTF-S) with 660 personnel; Turkish Brigadier General Ugur Tarcin took command of MNTF-S in May, 2007.

¶7. (U) The TAF has also made small but consistent contributions of troops and materiel to the following peacekeeping operations: Deny Flight over Bosnia, ALBA in Albania, and Essential Harvest and subsequent missions in Macedonia.

Extending its Reach

¶8. (U) Turkey has contributed to humanitarian missions well beyond the Middle East and Balkans, providing support to multi-national peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in Africa, East Asia, and recently even the U.S. -- the TAF provided a C-130 transport aircraft for NATO support efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

-- Provide Comfort: Following the first Gulf War, more than 300,000 displaced people sought refuge in Turkey. Turkey contributed shelter and humanitarian aid to refugees within

its borders and in Iraq, and granted NGOs access to its borders. In 1991, with the aim of providing immediate assistance to Northern Iraqis fleeing dire conditions in the South, the TAF joined Joint Task Force Provide Comfort. The Task Force deployed to Turkey's Incirlik Air Base, from where it delivered supplies, built refugee camps, established security zones, and maintained a no-fly zone above Northern Iraq.

-- UNOSOM: The TAF sent a 300-person mechanized unit to the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in 1993. UNOSOM command was for a time held by a Turkish lieutenant general.

-- UNMISSET: The TAF contributed military personnel to the UN Mission in East Timor (UNMISSET) from 2000 until 2004.

-- Pakistan Earthquake Relief: In October, 2005, Turkey quickly dispatched civilian and military search and rescue teams to Pakistan. Turkey contributed two airbases as NATO forward logistics bases, and Turkish aircraft flew 19 sorties to Pakistan.

An International Observer

19. (U) The Turkish military also participates in several ongoing international monitoring missions: the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), and the EU Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In April, 2006, Turkey set up a military field hospital with Turkish doctors in the Darfur region of Sudan, and is currently scouting locations for a permanent hospital. Also, the TAF donated the use of a C-160 aircraft to transport troops to UNMIS.

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